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SOURCE Pod Zastavom Internacionalizma [anti-Tito emigre newspaper].

STATUS OF FARM WORKERS IN YUGOSLAVIA

Tito's order on the crop purchase of grain favors the kulak over the small and middle farmer. As coupons for the purchase of manufactured goods are issued to farmers in proportion to the amounts of products they deliver, and as kulaks have more land, they receive far more coupons, in fact, more than they need.

At the time contracts were signed (before planting), farmers were advanced 40 percent of the coupons due them. At that time there were sufficient quantities of manufactured products available in the markets. As the small and middle farmers had no or practically no coupons, the kulaks were able to buy more than their share. They were able to buy several years' supply of farm implements and other manufactured goods at favorable prices.

Most kuleks had a surplus of fodder coupons, which they sold to small farmers and blue- and white-collar workers or gave to farmhands in exchange for labor. Meanwhile, small and middle farmers could not obtain even the most essential manufactured goods because the markets have been empty since August 1948. Thus, they were not able to redeem such coupons as they received. Such a policy directly strengthens the position of the kuleks.

Besides grain, the kulaks sell livestock and animal products to the state at tied prices and for coupons. They thus acquire tens of thousands of coupons, which they sell for one or 2 dinars in the Vojvodina, for example, or for 3 to 5 dinars if they take them to Serbia. Thus, the kulaks sell their produce at a price several times the apparent price. Their costs are reduced because they can buy farm labor with coupons; while even middle farmers are often compelled to work for kulaks to obtain the barest necessities for their families. By selling their quotas to the state for tied prices, the kulaks have cut their tax by 30 percent and made up for the cash fines imposed during the 1947 crop purchase. Hence, the kulaks' standard of living rose rapidly during 1948, while small and middle farmers were often reduced to beggary.

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Equally difficult is the lot of farm workers in the so-called farm workers' cooperatives. The "Zora Socijalizma" Farm Workers' Cooperative in Bela Crkva, for example, had to deliver eight carloads of grain to the state, whether or not it had enough left to feed its members. The cooperative received 303,000 coupons for 1,183 members, or not enough to buy one pair of shoes for each member. The "Vardar" and "Sloga" Farm Workers' Cooperatives in Gudurica in Vrsac Srez grow grapes and do not have grain for food, nor can they obtain it even by selling all their wine to the state at the assigned prices. In June 1948 these two cooperatives had no bread for their members. Many farm workers' cooperatives are without farm machinery and tools; many lack even draft animals. Poorly organized machinery stations cannot help the cooperatives, and the cooperative farms lag behind the kulaks'.

The position of the kulaks is especially favorable in the so-called "groups for joint cultivation of the land," in which the kulaks obtain the farm labor of small and middle farmers. In this type of "cooperative," small and middle farmers and kulaks must divide up their land and cultivate it jointly. Each one collects the income from his own land, and a computation is made of how much work the kulak did with his own machinery and the draft animals of the small and middle farmers, and how much physical labor the small and middle farmers did on the kulak's property. Thus, the Tito clique provides that the small farmer must not only work for the kulak for a low wage, but must wait until the end of the year to receive it.

Recently Tito's faction has been forcibly compelling farmers to join farm workers' cooperatives, using not only brute force but economic pressure as well, through levies of taxes, meat, and fats. These measures fall heavily upon the small and middle farmers. They must buy livestock from the kulaks under difficult terms, while the kulaks have both money and livestock and can easily survive the seizures.

In spite of all this pillage of the farmers, workers in the cities are hungry, for the livestock and lard seized from the farmers go almost exclusively for export to the western countries.

When cooperatives are formed by this type of violence, and all kinds of farmers join, the kulaks often have the major voice.

Every srez committee has been ordered forcibly to form cooperatives in every village. Communist Party members know that this is impossible. After visiting the scene in Vlasotince Srez, the members of the srez committee came to the conclusion that farm workers' cooperatives could not be formed there. The Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party was therefore obliged to send out some of its own members - Melantije Popovic in Vlasotince Srez, Dragi Stamenkovic in Leskovac Srez, etc.

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